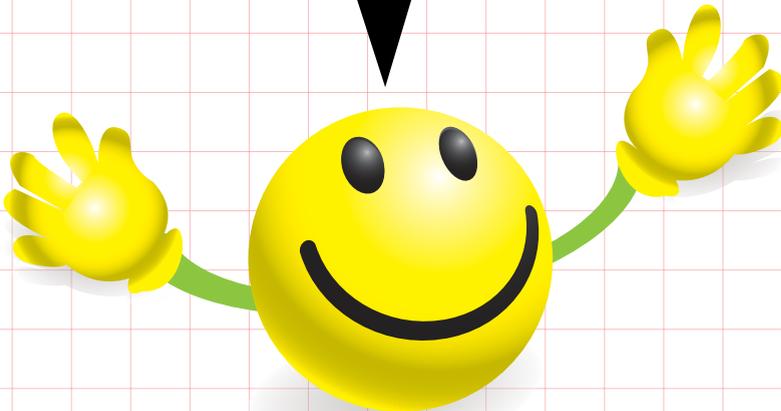




Enlarge. Excel. Evolve

And  
One Fine Day ...

The Power of Storytelling



**Dr Amit Nagpal**

Social Media & Personal Branding Coach



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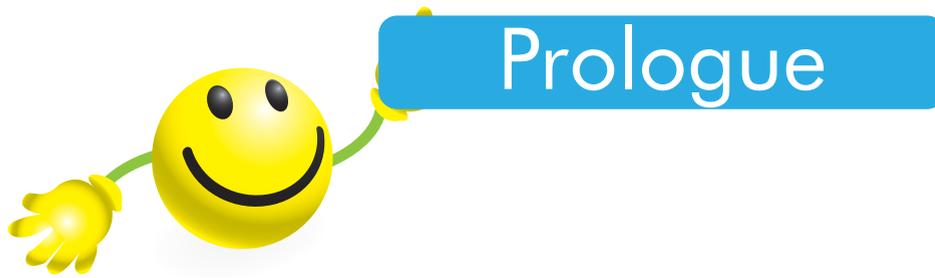
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# Prologue

I decided to conduct a Story Blogathon in May 2013 to demonstrate the power of storytelling in general and storytelling for personal branding in particular. The stories received were highly inspiring, shared the hearts of the contributors and I felt the need to compile them into an e-book.

20 entrepreneurs and intrapreneurs from across the world, share their stories of struggles and victories, how they learnt an important lesson of life or how they used social media and personal branding for business/career growth.

## The Power of Storytelling

Recently I was asked to introduce myself at an event and I told, “As a child I was fond of storytelling and as a student, I was passionate about branding. And one fine day, I realised that storytelling is the most powerful branding tool, be it people, products or companies.” OMG, even while introducing myself, I was telling a story. Stories were probably always in my blood.

Though right from the beginning of my personal branding journey, I was doing storytelling (unconsciously, without realizing its power), of late I have become a consciously passionate storyteller.

Stories can be told in a single line and anecdote or can take the shape of a novel or even a series. [Stories stay in our mind](#) or memory and also help us [attract more customers](#). And as Maya Angelou rightly says, “There is no greater agony than bearing an untold story inside you.” But remember there may be many a twist in the stories.

## Enlarge, Excel & Evolve-The Story



When I talk of the necessity for personal growth, to be successful on social media, my audience often gives me a puzzled look. Then I give a smile and begin the explanation of my approach and philosophy, “Enlarge as a Human Being, Excel as a Social Media Being and Evolve as a Personal Brand.”

### Background

February 2011. As an upcoming personal branding professional, I was creating and curating content from fields as diverse as storytelling, personal development, and social media & online branding on my social networks. And one fine day, Jennifer Sertl, my personal development coach nudged me during a Skype chat and asked me about my focus and context.

It set me thinking and I thought hard. Was there a connection between the topics I was talking about? If yes, how are they connected? I found personal branding professionals across the world try to differentiate themselves from image management professionals, as they talk about personal development as a part of personal branding (unlike image management). Then I came across [Time magazine’s article on personal branding](#), which defined personal branding as “Part life coaching, part management consulting, personal branding applies the language, philosophies and strategies of Madison Avenue to the brand that is you.”

I was getting clearer about my focus, and now I needed a framework which could put the pieces together. And then the phrase 'Enlarge Excel Evolve' flashed in my mind (representing a holistic approach to personal branding, where personal development is the starting point of the journey.) Enlarge or personal development is a very broad concept though, hence I have chosen the focus as wisdom on social media. ([Personal Growth, Wisdom & Social Media Success](#))

The next natural step was to do the detailing and the diagrammatic representation of 3 E



Enlarge. Excel. Evolve

I wanted to help professionals develop as global brands with a global mindset, hence the globe was kept in the centre and the 3 E's formed a circle/ cycle around it. The green colour of 3Es represented sustainability and the cycle represented the fact that the 'Enlarge Excel Evolve' was a cyclical and continuous process.

## The Three Steps

The next step was to write the details of each step and what they involved.

### Step 1

#### ENLARGE as a Human Being

Personal growth should be the starting point of the journey and it continues through the journey of life.

The more you promote yourself, the more you are seen as a navel gazer and a person trying to prove himself/herself. Keep looking for areas of improvement, keep looking inside for things gone wrong and keep looking at the positive side of people.

Instead of filling your emotional and ego tanks, fill the tanks of others. Enlarge and nurture your network too and you will end up getting enlarged yourself. I once posted on Facebook, "People believe it, when someone else is appreciating you & God comes to your rescue, when someone else is praying for you."

### Step 2-

#### EXCEL as a Social Media Being

Social media is a glasshouse in terms of transparency and hence it can be very difficult to hide your true personality for long. Unfriend and remove connection options are easy to use. Social media is primarily for sharing and not selling.

We should not forget social media is media too and we need not cause permanent damage to our reputation because we are temporarily upset.

As you start growing as a person, the results are visible sooner or a little later. Your network starts respecting you for your traits; be it wisdom, knowledge, caring attitude and so on.

### Step 3-

#### EVOLVE as a Personal Brand.

You have already created a personal brand to a certain degree. Now the brand needs to evolve and grow and the time has come to communicate and refine the brand. Once you have become what you aspired for, you need to communicate what you are. Ask your connections and friends to give feedback for your ideas and business concepts.

So dear readers, take charge of your life and your story.  
Keep enlarging, excelling and evolving and remember,

**"The Show must go on."**





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The "Labor"  
You Love:  
Fear of  
Giving Birth



# The “Labor” You Love: Fear of Giving Birth

## Rory Kelly Connor



Rory Kelly Connor shares a very interesting post on birthing your new business or product, it being like a baby which needs your labor of love. She addresses the start up entrepreneur as "The mother of your dream" and giving the example of a client emphasizes it's scary and exhilarating nature.

You have this idea for a business (initiative, book, screenplay, product, service...you tell me). You have been working on it a long time, getting it ready. You have nurtured and grown it into a real live entity. You know its parts, its arms and legs, intimately. You have prepared a room for it in your life. You have picked out a name and told people it will be delivered soon. You have even prepared a sample announcement to send to your friends and family when it is here. You are ready.

So what's the hold up?

### Creating is Sexy

As a PR and branding expert, I have always been adept at using words and ideas to shift thinking or educate in a way that makes sense to an audience. Core to being a great Coach and strategic advisor is an ability to teach in a manner that spurs the “Aha” light to go off in a client’s head. Not everyone “gets” something in the same way or is motivated by the same analogy. The important thing is to know your clients well and to communicate using examples they will understand. Which brings me to Honey (not her real name but I like saying Honey...)



My client, Honey, had a great theme for a business. It was gestating inside of her just waiting to be born. Super creative and wildly funny, very smart and business savvy, her authentic writing was a gift from heaven. And she has that special something that causes people to want to hang out with her. To pay to hang out with her and pick her brain. She was just afraid to allow her heart and her head to consummate the idea into being.

Honey and I entered into a coaching/advisory relationship after she attended my first Fear Workshop in New York City. She needed clarity and a plan of action. Together, we worked through limiting beliefs and obstacles. We sifted through the myriad of manifestations for her theme. We plotted and strategized. She did the inner work needed to operate from a position of power and the outer work needed to establish a business. One day, things got very, very sexy and the intercourse fertilized her “embryo.” And the planning for the birth (aka launch) began.

## You are the Mother of Your Dream

For months, Honey did all the work needed to bring her new venture to life. She knew what it looked like, felt like, and how she wanted it to feel. She had decided on services, designed an outstanding logo, and formulated a brilliant branding theme that had amazing resonance. In addition, she had purchased her web domain and began executing the steps to set up her business. Working for a Fortune 500 company that serves business customers, she knows marketing like a pro. She was ready and had a due date in mind.

Then everything stalled. The due date came and went. Swollen with the need to make it happen, Honey continued to imagine a healthy delivery. We visualized. We further clarified. And we fortified. We had a major fear of labor and delivery on our hands. I needed to think fast. I needed to be creative. And then it hit me. It was time to administer my own brand of pitocin – Mother’s Guilt - to induce labor.

Just as I have described here, I walked the hallways of our conversation using the birth analogy. Honey got it right away. She realized she was afraid, overwhelmed by the reality of this whole new life she would be bringing into her world. She had dreamed of this “baby” for so long and now it was crowning. It was really happening. She was so ready I could feel the head popping out. Still, her legs remained resolutely locked together.

Having been a support person at two live births and an advisor for scores of new business and product launches, I knew that it sometimes could get messy. It was time for the Coach to get right into the action and yell “PUSH!” In other words, I said to Honey, “You are so ready. Everything is set. This baby is ready to be born. It is time for you to push and bring this baby into your world. What kind of mother are you???”

My words were met with absolute silence. Then I heard a gasp. I could feel the horror, the guilt, the dawning of responsibility rolling all over her belly, right down to her.....well, you know what I mean.

“Oh my God,” she said. “What kind of mother are you?! That is brilliant! And I know brilliant! It is so time to have this baby!”

I am happy to report that my analogy worked. It resonated in a way that stuck with Honey and changed the dynamic to one of action and responsibility to self. She was being held accountable regarding the birth of her dreams in a way that vibrated at the core of her being. “What kind of mother are you???”

## New Life

There is nothing more amazing to witness than a new life as it emerges into this world, then hearing it give a great cry of joy at being alive – even when it is someone else’s “baby.” I am humbled and honored by the great trust that clients place in me as they choose me to support them through a new “motherhood.”

Giving birth to a new business or idea or product is a very personal journey. It can be scary and exhilarating at the same time. Knowing you don't have to do it alone is a blessing. Yet, even if circumstances require that you do, it is a sacred responsibility to yourself to try to bring your new life into this world. Being pregnant with your possibilities for years or a lifetime, never experiencing the relief and satisfaction of bringing that new life into the world, is an agony.

Yes, it is always your choice. Yet, don't let fear stop you. Do the work, then open your legs and push! Wow! You are one seriously sexy new mother! Well done, Honey.



Based out of New York and Philadelphia, Rory Kelly Connor is CEO & Founder of Can You Imagine - A Strategic Counsel & Coaching Consultancy. She brings more than 20 years of client experience to her role as a Global Business/Brand Strategy Expert, Peak Potential Coach, and Certified Life & Career Coach. An accomplished writer, trainer, workshop leader, and change management expert, Rory is also currently a Featured Coach for the prestigious New York Women in Communications Inc. During her career, Rory has worked with an impressive array of clients around the world, providing counsel and coaching to C-level executives, corporate leadership, thought leaders, entrepreneurs, creatives, and individuals, among others. She has successfully developed and managed numerous multimillion dollar initiatives focused on brand and product communications, issues management, public awareness, corporate reputation and public affairs, and has counseled and media-trained CEOs, as well as numerous experts and spokespeople. Her media relations efforts are legendary, generating hundreds of millions of media impressions across the U.S. and abroad in every form of media, including wire services, broadcast, print, radio and web-based outlets. For more visit, [www.rorykellyconnor.com](http://www.rorykellyconnor.com)

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What Really  
Matters-  
Lessons from  
My Childhood



# What Really Matters-Lessons from My Childhood Jennifer Sertl



Jennifer Sertl shares a touching story about her childhood struggles and the impact of the struggles on her as an adult. She tried to learn from the dragon of mental illness. A very inspiring story about the strength of the human spirit.

I am a reconciliation of spirits. My father was a surgeon and my mother an artist, both in painting and in playing 12 different instruments. They divorced when I was ten and it was good that they did because there was always this tension between raw intellect and raw expression and at one point you might think intellect would win, and in the end raw expression had more endurance. I say this as my mother has the dragon to slay called mental illness. When she was younger she didn't always take her medication. As a result she had three suicide attempts that I know of. As a child I was very angry at her attempts and can remember at one point even wishing she would be successful. Not because I was a cruel child, but because it was so hard not knowing if she was stable or present or safe or alive. The anxiety of "not knowing" and "worry" was very painful. The irony here is that my father - while being as present and stable as a rock and might I add also as emotionally impenetrable as a rock - was killed in a car accident when he was 44. In Wyoming they have a saying "when the wind stops, the cows fall down." I had no idea how much my anger and fear of my father was like the wind - so when he fell, it was a complete shock. I had no idea how I was buoyed by my resistance to his presence. See I thought my mother was fragile. I had no idea how life would teach me otherwise.



I am writing this now for two significant reasons. I am turning 44 in just a couple of weeks and am facing what many of you have already faced- the question of “will my life transcend my parent’s fate?” It makes me very reflective of what I have learnt from my childhood. The second reason is that many people who survive cancer wear a band of their pride in surviving - there is a celebration of strength, resilience and community; there is not such zeitgeist for those with mental illness. So with Mother’s Day and my birthday approaching I felt it would be both cathartic and helpful to share how much I learned from my mother’s illness.

### Here is what her dragon taught me:

1.

I learned that one’s core has nothing to do with money or things. Three times in my childhood, my mother was homeless and lost everything she owned - pictures, instruments, books. Three times that I know of (and probably many more) she rebuilt her life. I have never worried about money or fundamental survival as she was such a strong beacon of being herself regardless of what she owned.

2.

I learned that reality lies within not without. As a child when I visited my mother in the hospital I would interact with many other patients that were a bit “out there.” Because I was too young for shame - I had no problem jumping into character and having fascinating conversations with people with wild imaginations and who being in character was true emersion. As an eight year old, I remember the day and the time when I was sipping chocolate milk getting ready to play another round of ping-pong and said to myself “All these people truly see the world differently - let me put my mind down so I can go play with their world.” What a gift, many adults have to learn that reality is a perception. I kind of grew up backwards.

### 3.

In the end art transcends intelligence. My mother is now in her sixties and I would say she is thriving. She has a wonderful husband who ensures she takes her medicine and gets continuous care. They live a very modest, very meaningful life. When I see her now, I see a mirror. I see how much she and I look alike. I see how much of my work has become art and expression. In my thirties I was an executive coach and it was very important for me to work with very smart people and there was an oxytocin rush when I would be asked real juicy strategic questions. Some of my motivation came from a place that was out of fear “if smart successful people need my strategic help I can prove that I am sane and intelligent, too.” I am not proud of this, however it was true motivation. In my forties, I am finding that the insights that I get come from grace of inspiration that is much more about art and the imagination than intelligence. I still get that oxytocin rush of being asked really juicy strategic questions, however, I am really more interested in making a difference than making an impression.



I have written this for myself, I have written this for my mother, I have written this for all you out there who are silently struggling with the shame or fear of the shadow of mental illness. I have learnt so much from my mother's dragon. It is my wish that you might also find a quiet space to write three life lessons the journey of the illness has taught you. And like Diana the huntress, put those lessons in your quiver and know that you have tools - like arrows that will keep you safe on your journey.

Onward . . .

Jennifer



Jennifer Sertl is a World champion of organizational & individual agility, Beacon of hope. Purveyor of discipline. Global Citizen. Transleader. Coach. Facilitator. Co-Author- Strategy, Leadership & the Soul and Founder of Agility3R. Her firm is dedicated to IT leadership, where she runs IT leadership roundtables. Her works have found mention in both Forbes & Harvard Business Review. She is also a thought leader in corporate consciousness-the convergence of neuroscience & existential philosophy fostering inspiration and subsequently creating strategic advantage and enhancing value. She is an internationally respected author, keynote speaker **Learn more about Jennifer here.**

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Ghosts  
Don't Exist,  
Brains Do



# Ghosts Don't Exist, Brains Do

## Michael Thallium



Michael Thallium shares a unique post on the power of our beliefs, the maps that exist in our mind and how they stop us from uncovering our inner greatness. He rightly says, "Any person who wants to understand and empower people has to pay attention to both his own set of beliefs and the different sets of beliefs of people around."

When you look back at the history of mankind you can't help but realise how important paradigms are. I first heard of paradigms when I studied Stephen R. Covey's teachings on how to become a more effective and greater person. It had been many years earlier that Thomas Kuhn, in his book *The Structure of Scientific Revolutions*, first introduced the concept of "paradigm shift": rather than solely making progress in linear and continuous ways, the scientific fields evolve thanks to paradigm shifts which open up a whole new world of approaches to understanding what had never been considered valid before.

I must admit that talking about "paradigms" may sound too scientific, too rational, for some people. That is why I sometimes avoid that term and talk about a "set of beliefs in our brains". We are what we believe we are and we see the world through the eyes of our beliefs, through our minds' eyes. There is also this dichotomy between, so as to say, Rational Thinking (mind) and Spiritual Thinking (soul) traditionally associated with Western and Eastern cultures respectively. I think that is a fruitless dichotomy. In the end it is the profound understanding of our different sets of beliefs what wins regardless of whether you call it mind or soul.



Take a present map of the world today and compare it with the different maps of the world that have been before in history, compare the different projections and perspectives. If you do this exercise you will realise how narrow minded we are, when it comes to understanding people and the world.



I am not advocating for a scientific thinking neither mocking a spiritual thinking. However, I lately have come down to an interesting realisation. The history of mankind has been that of the history of ignorance. Human beings have tended to assign “supernatural powers” to everything that could not be understood. There were “ghosts” everywhere... We saw “ghosts”, we still see “ghosts” there, where things are hard to fathom... Well, ghosts do not exist!

Any person who wants to understand and empower people has to pay attention to both his own set of beliefs and the different sets of beliefs of people around. Then you will have to elaborate a new map of the world -a more global and respectful map that can lead you to the lands of greatness- and make sure that this map will take you there where you want more effectively. And we can use our brains to do that.

**Ghosts don't exist, brains do!**



Michael Thallium is a Global and Greatness Coach based in Spain. Michael has spent many years of his life traveling around many countries and continents, sailing the seas and flying the skies all over the world. Since 2008 he is dedicated to his passions namely coaching, language & communication and music. He believes in the greatness of people and his vision is to help others find their greatness globally. He has done different jobs including translator/interpreter, au pair, tourist entertainer, language consultant, PR manager, assistant cruise director, singer & musician, shore excursions manager, international sales manager and hotel manager. **Learn more about Michael here**

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Don't  
Think You  
Have a Story?



# Don't Think You Have a Story?

## Walter Akana



Walter Akana shares an inspiring post on why everyone of us has a story, though it may not always have big triumphs, drama or overcoming of big adversities. Yet each story is meaningful to us and others, as it conveys to the world our unique experience of life and the insights which we got from the situations we came across.

If you're like most people, you really enjoy a great story! More often than not, what you most like is the suspense, drama, and triumph that accompany the central character's efforts to overcome adversity or simply to deal with a difficult situation. In fact, part of the reason stories can be so engaging, is that we tend to **identify with the protagonist** so much that we feel we have a personal stake in his or her success.

On some level, we do.

According to **Lisa Cron**, author of **Wired for Story**,  
"Story is what enabled us to imagine what might happen in the future, and so prepare for it ... we're wired to turn to story to teach us the way of the world."

So, on a very fundamental level, story allows us to find meaning and apply it to our own challenges and aspirations for a better life. We identify with the protagonist not so much because we want them to succeed, but because we want to succeed.





Increasingly, this fundamental idea is putting emphasis on brand as story. As well, it's why we see personal brand story emerging as a critical element of true differentiation. After all, no one else has your story. Yet, what is really important in uncovering and telling your story is to realize it's not for you at all.

Rather, it's a way for your audience to find something in your experience that resonates for them, especially in ways that give them self-acceptance and perhaps hope. In fact, as [Seth Godin](#) points out in a [recent blog post](#), brands are instrumental in helping us love ourselves. When your story engages your audience emotionally not only do they identify with you, but they begin to feel a bond with you! So, your brand story is the vehicle to foster emotional connection between you and your audiences.

But what if your story is, well, kind of ordinary?

### [Tweet This](#)

Recently, I noticed that a member of an online community, let's call her Jane, did not have an "about" page. Given that she runs an inspirational website, I wondered about her story. What inspired her? When I pointed this out, she told me she had no story, adding, "I'm pretty ordinary and 'normal'. No huge obstacles or triumphs here really." And to back up her position she referred to a [post](#) by [Alexandra Franzen](#) who acknowledges the power of triumph over adversity and then asks,



Unfortunately, Jane had taken this as permission to not have a story. So, I suggested she think about her story as one that turned on a moment of insight which shaped her future – even if that insight seemed to be a only a small spike in her relatively ordinary life.

Surprisingly, a few weeks later, she wrote me to say she had created an “about” page and had told her story. When I read it, I realized that she had indeed been raised by a conservative family, and that her life could actually be called relatively uneventful. Well, except for one thing.

At one point in life, she faced the relatively normal problem of having to lose weight. So, she joined a program to help her. Pretty normal. Yet, in a powerful moment of clarity, she found an inspiration that she knew could make a difference in her success, and when it did, she knew she had to share it with others. It’s exactly what she’s doing today, and it’s what makes her the authentic and credible brand that she is to the community she is building on line!

So, if you don’t think you have a story, think again. Think about what you do and the value you bring to others, and then ask yourself why you do it. And as you begin to surface some answers, ask why again....and again... Probe until you find the moment of insight – however ordinary or dramatic – that put you on the path to serving the people you serve in the way that only you can.



Walter Akana is a career and life strategist, who brings a unique blend of training and experience in coaching, personal branding, and online identity to guide mid-career clients who are hungry for change. Using proven discovery methods, as well as his own finely-tuned perceptions, he helps clients uncover their own “brand DNA,” and then convey who they are in a way that allows them to truly stand out. Passionate about learning, self-development, and self-direction, he brings a distinctive philosophy to running his life, and to working with clients: It’s your life, own it!

**Learn more about Walter [here](#).**

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From  
Hanuman Prasad  
to Santy



From Hanuman Prasad to Santy -

## The Story of Santosh Goenka



Santosh Goenka shares his personal story of learning and evolution. Tatas, Birla, Ambanis, Mahindras & Goenkas-these are household names in India because these industrial groups control a major chunk of Indian business. Indian Express, the most respected newspaper in India (for its journalism of courage) founded by Late Sh Ramnath Goenka has had loyal following for decades (including me as a child). After pioneering B2B magazines in India (Express Computers, Express Pharma etc) now Santosh is pioneering community wisdom and its impact on relevant media under the aegis of his NGO Better India Foundation.

Hanuman Prasad was my birth name (based on astrology) and later on I was named Santosh (Santosh means satisfaction). Why Santosh? Of all the children born in the Goenka joint family at Janakpur, Nepal my father (the second in the family of five children of Baijnath & Narmada Devi) gave birth to the first son Sushil (my elder brother) and I was the second. So far the family had only girl children and with my birth sprang a lot of jealousy and to soothe feelings of the other family members, my grandmother named me Santosh, which meant-stop having boys now and let other members too have a boy child.

Next came the name my mother called me or Suru (from the world Banasur), the naughty Rakshasa (devil) who had a lot of strength and played lot of pranks. My mother used to tell me that I was very naughty during my early years and would carry heavy household items from the ground floor to the top of the three-storied ancestral home.



Then later in life while working at Indian Express I was given the nick name Santi, by my friend and editor Rajan Bala. He was a great friend and teacher who spent the evenings teaching me the realities of the work place and the route to survival in the corporate jungle. Indian Express was one such jungle (based at Express Towers, Nariman Point, the most prestigious address in Mumbai). My brother Vivek Goenka, my sister in law Sharmista and my wife Sharmila, call me Santy to this day, out of love.

I prefer the spelling Santy to Santi and I coined the term Santy Go (it tells me, Hey Santy go win the world with love). I plan to chronicle my journey in a website [santygo.com](http://santygo.com), where every person who has touched my life needs a thanks and mention.

I have been blessed with wonderful colleagues and there have been many landmarks of learning such as pursuing Stanford Professional Publishing Course (SPPC) in 1990. Many other points of my journey such as Business Publications in Indian Express, launching boutique advisory Diagonal Global and Better India Foundation and heading DVV Media, Germany's Indian arm have been thrilling moments. I have got so much love from family, school elders, friends, work colleagues, and so on, I plan to multiply the process of caring and sharing (and gathering and spreading community wisdom), and through my platform 'Better India Foundation', spread it all over the world.

Later when I shifted to Delhi from Mumbai, due to professional reasons (and joined Business India as Executive Director), I came across Deepak Goel, (who through his [iMET Global](http://iMET Global) has plans to spread innovation, mentoring, entrepreneurship and talent, across India and later on to eastern part of the world.) Through him I have made wonderful friends in Delhi and we are building a community of like- minded people.

I remain Action Inspirer, Motivational Speaker, Community Builder and Wisdom Seeker. In my view, community wisdom is going to drive media platforms henceforth.

And my journey continues.



Santosh's journey in publications business began in 1981 with The Indian Express Group. While at the Indian Express, Santosh created one of the group's most profitable properties, the Business Publications Division, which published scores of niche magazines catering to the IT, Hospitality, Pharma, and Textile industries during the early nineties. He is currently the Executive Director of India's reputed business magazine 'Business India' & Founder of Better India Foundation (an NGO). He firmly believes, "The main transition is in your own mind, are you ready to think differently?"

**Learn more about Santosh here.**

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Well Paid Job -  
\$100k+,  
Stock Options =  
\$Millions,  
Defining Your  
Personal Brand  
= Priceless



# Well Paid Job - \$100k+, Stock Options = \$Millions, Defining Your Personal Brand = Priceless Paul Copcutt



Paul Copcutt shares the priceless nature of Brand You. Paul's post inspires the readers to take risks and act as intrapreneurs in the organisations. As his profile also says, "He works with executives, managers and teams for leading Fortune 500 corporations helping them to think entrepreneurially while acting corporately."

Well Paid Job - \$100k+, Stock Options = \$Millions, Defining Your Personal Brand = Priceless [Tweet This](#)

In the recession of the late 80's and early 90's I had just been downsized for the second time in my corporate career in the consumer goods industry. The payoff was minimal and I was living on \$250 a week government assistance. Also I had taken in a lodger to help cover mortgage payments and was using public transport to go to sales interviews. The outlook was, to say the least, pretty bleak.

I decided that I needed to gain more stable employment in a growth industry and identified healthcare as almost recession proof. Having spent several years in sales and marketing recruitment. I put all my training and own coaching advice about informational interviewing in to practice. However I was quickly told by everyone I spoke to that to break in to the medical industries in the early 90's that you needed a solid track record, science qualifications and a degree. I was the complete opposite with ten different employers on my resume, had left school at 18 under the threat of expulsion and my science teachers had labeled me as an idiot with an E grade average.....



Three and a half years later I was leaving an already successful medical device sales position to join, as employee number 29, a rapidly growing UK biotech firm as National Sales Manager. I hired a non-scientific sales team, launched the company's first commercial product in the world and two years later was involved in the Canadian launch as part of an international corporation with a market value of several hundred million dollars and almost 1,000 employees worldwide.

At one point, I was even (at least on paper) a millionaire. Eventually the company sold off its commercial success' for \$100 million dollars, returned to its R&D roots and closed its North American offices. As a result of these experiences I decided to dedicate the rest of my professional life to helping others realize their own career goals.

It was not until a couple of years later that Tom Peters coined the phrase "The Brand Called You" in his Fast Company magazine article and we all started to become much more aware of the term personal branding.

I am always noticing that many people in business have great experience, skills and attributes, but aren't always able to present or promote them in the best possible light or sometimes fail to gain access to the right audience. Which means that they do not progress as well as they expected, or they miss out on opportunities to switch to something they really want to do.

The more that professionals can clearly identify and communicate their unique value and develop, grow and protect their personal brands, the more they enjoy greater professional recognition, boost their incomes, gain deeper personal satisfaction and understanding and achieve more for themselves and others.

I still have the stock options piece of paper that at one time was worth over a million dollars. Now I consider it priceless because it constantly reminds me of the opportunity that branding yourself can bring you. The opportunity may disappear but once defined and worked on your personal brand will always be with you,  
**after all IT IS YOU.**



Paul Copcutt, Personal Brand Architect and Chief Square Peg has never quite fit in the normal template. Now a sought after personal brand speaker and media resource he has been featured by Forbes, Money, Reuters, the Wall Street Journal and Elle. Paul works with executives, managers and teams for leading Fortune 500 corporations helping them to think entrepreneurially while acting corporately.

He writes regularly on personal brand tips, resources and insights at his Just My Toonies Worth Blog <http://squarepegsolution.com/blog-2/>, can be followed on **Twitter@paulcopcutt** and connected with on LinkedIn [ca.linkedin.com/in/paulcopcutt/](http://ca.linkedin.com/in/paulcopcutt/)

7

I Love You  
"Dear Music",  
Even If You  
Don't Love  
Me Back



# I Love You "Dear Music", Even If You Don't Love Me Back

## Ananda Sukarlan



The piano maestro, Ananda Sukarlan talks about the importance of stubbornness (aka perseverance), passion and carrying on with one sided love, for mega success. Zapped, read it for yourself

Do you think I am gifted in music? Well, not everybody thought so. When I was at my early age, for several years I studied piano with my sister at home. We were 7 siblings, and my parents only had enough money to send one of us to a music school, so my sister had to "forward" her knowledge she learned to her brothers and sisters. She quit her lessons before I was a teenager so I took over her piano lessons at a music school in Jakarta (at that time in the late 70s, the number of music schools in Jakarta could still be counted with the fingers of one hand). One day, my mother came with me to pick up the report of my progress evaluation. I remember my piano teacher regretfully informed her that my piano playing wasn't good enough to continue the studies. I wasn't even able to repeat, I just had to leave. So it "seems that your son had no hope", a.k.a. I have a lack of musical talent....

My mother wasn't angry at the time. I wasn't disappointed either. If I wasn't talented, well that's it, right? Even by nature there are no musical talents in my family history, so it seemed logical. But I was hooked up with the piano, talented or not, so I asked my mom to continue piano lessons with a private teacher, and luckily she granted my wish. At that time I did not aspire to be a professional in the field of music, let alone classical music. I just loved, blindly loved music, works of Mozart, Beethoven, Mahler etc.. If my love were "unrequited", so be it!



My parents weren't important or rich people but they had a free spirit. My dad said that any work is honorable and decent; whether as a musician, soldier (such as his profession), teacher (my late mother was English professor at the university), businessman or a street food vendor (as it seemed that there was greater opportunity to become this latter than to be a pianist).

After graduating from high school I wanted to continue studying music abroad even though my parents were full of doubt. Becoming a musician or artist of any field, though "decent" was something unimaginable in Indonesia at that time. What happened after that of course is history; I did not become a street food vendor and having a simple and happy life with my wife and kids. Maybe my biggest talent is not music but stubbornness which made me go ahead with what I wanted. Now, with my "lack of talent", I haven't become just a pianist but also a composer! Who would have thought I would make music and work with musicians that I have always admired, and play with symphony orchestras, writing operas, music for films and working with prominent writers and artists of other fields? Not bad for "a lack of talent", eh?

My father once told me that he didn't have the key to success, but he indeed had the key to failure, i.e "trying to make everyone happy". "It was not possible", he said. We're going to get tired in making everyone happy. What is liked by one person is not necessarily liked by others, and both could be right. We just have to do what we believe in, and follow our hearts. I just knew it for a fact with my heart, not told by my piano teacher or even my parents since I was a kid, that although I am "not talented" I cannot live without music. Maybe there are people who are not happy to see my success. But, I don't have to make them happy, right?

Moreover, my success is not a facebook status, so there's no need for anyone to click "like"!



Ananda Sukarlan was mentioned as “One of the world's leading pianists and has been at the forefront of championing new piano music” (Sydney Morning Herald). Born on June 10th, 1968 this Indonesian composer & pianist is now living in Spain, and is now the most internationally well known Indonesian musician. His more than 200 musical works embrace all fields: operas, film music, numerous works for voice, for piano, symphony orchestras and chamber works and are being performed all over the world. He is listed in the "2000 Outstanding Musicians of the 20th century" published by Cambridge, and has recorded 15 CDs, among others with the complete piano works of Jesus Rueda on NAXOS label and the complete piano works of Toru Takemitsu to be released later this year.

You can listen to one of his works here : <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bhGGGKMIApg> . To hear more of his music and know more of him, you can search "Ananda Sukarlan" at appstore to be downloaded in your iPad, iPhone or iPod touch. He regularly writes in his highly popular blog <http://andystarblogger.blogspot.com> and he **tweets at @anandasukarlan**

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Victim or  
Champion-  
A Story



## Victim or Champion - A Story

# John Murphy



The author of 14 books and well known personality, John Murphy talks about a childhood situation where he had to decide whether he wanted to be victim or champion. And he made the right choice, which made him what he is today.

When I was in high school, I experienced a devastating accident. I was working on a lawn crew and I cut my foot severely with a lawn mower. Six days in the hospital and ten hours of surgery later, I was told by an award-winning, internationally-renowned surgeon that I would never play football again—a passion of mine at the time—and that I would be lucky to walk again without limping. I wept with grief and remorse. At age 17, what was I to do now?

The year was 1977 and in those days lawn mowers did not have many of the safety features they have today. Perhaps I could argue that it was the lawn mower manufacturer's fault? In a very litigious society, there are certainly many who might agree. Maybe it was the homeowner's fault? After all, she asked me to cut down a stretch of tall field grass along the side her house. This was not part of our original deal and the tall grass was full of rocks, one of which I tripped over. Maybe I could blame the rock? Or maybe I could blame the surgeon or the work schedule or my shoes or the stars?



Truth be told, I owned it. It was my foot, my doing, my life. It was my choice to play victim or champion. I stood at a mystical fork in the road called life and I had to decide which way to go. I chose ownership. I opted to take charge and be responsible for moving forward in a positive way, not wallowing in grief over something I could not undo. This road made all the difference. Three years later, I was playing football for the University of Notre Dame, tapping a sign on Saturdays that reads “Play like a champion today.”

Peak performance requires mental, physical and emotional ownership. Tweet This  
Peak performance requires mental, physical and emotional ownership. Mind, body and soul must be focused, aligned and passionate about stepping up and delivering results. There is no room in this equation for procrastination, doubt, excuses, blame, denial or resistance. We have to take charge. We have to raise our hand. We have to volunteer. We have to visualize success, focus our efforts and make a commitment. We have to be responsible, set an example and make something happen.

Many of my clients struggle with taking ownership. Organizationally, culturally and individually, there is often a tendency to shift responsibility, deny accountability, rationalize waste and point the finger. I see it all the time. It exists in business, government, education and health care. It is as if the senior leadership is inviting people to take a risk and step up but relatively few proactively accept the call, including many people already in positions of management and leadership! It seems they would rather play it safe, standing on the sidelines instead of getting into the game.

What is holding them back? Is it fear, insecurity, doubt or disbelief? Is it ignorance, pride or ego? These are questions every leader must contemplate because without a true sense of ownership, the organization is paralyzed. Fear and blame are disempowering energies. Ignorance and ego are limiting factors. We need ownership to overcome these self-imposed constraints. Successful people know this and do something about it. It has certainly made a big difference for me and the thousands of people I have been able to coach as a result.



Recognized as an international expert on leading culture change, John Murphy helps organizations address this issue head on. The author of 13 books on related topics, and a guest on over 400 radio and television stations, Murphy teaches leaders worldwide how to integrate the culture piece (of OE) with the systems, structural, and “tools” components.

John Murphy has written an interesting book on this subject, Beyond Doubt : Four Steps to Inner Peace. book "Beyond Doubt" was selected as "Editors Choice Best Inspirational Book of 2010" by Allbooks Review in Toronto, Canada. His 14th book Zentrepreneur is releasing shortly. The nook combines two powerful practices: the art of positive thinking and good ideas (Zen) with the discipline of turning ideas into results by taking risk and action (Entrepreneurship).

**Learn more about John here.** You may also visit <http://www.venturemanagementconsultants.com/>

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When Walking  
on the  
Beaten Path  
Becomes  
a Challenge



# When Walking on the Beaten Path Becomes a Challenge

## Vijay Nallawalla



Vijay Nallawalla shares a story on his love for his mentor, books and art and the roller coaster ride of life.

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*'When you look back in life, the biggest regret shall not be over something you had done, but something you had not done' - Mark Twain.*

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The scant respect I had for mentors who were selflessly willing to guide me during my teenage years is a telling indictment of my attitude. There was the iconic Brother Murphy in high school and later, during my college days it was our principal, Shri Kodolikar (Sir, as we called him).

I was literally letting most of my potential go down the drain and Sir knew it. Our strong relationship strengthened because of his being a co-resident of our apartment complex. He would drop by once a week. A well read, simple and jovial person, he was very disarming by nature. That was perhaps one reason I took his advice a bit too lightly.

He had an enviable personal collection of Books, from classics to the contemporary, fiction to non-fiction. We were the beneficiaries of his largesse: he would hand pick books for me to read. I distinctly recall most of them although over three decades have since elapsed! Among them were a few by the **renowned Biographer, Irving Stone**: 'The Agony and the Ecstasy' on Michael Angelo and 'Lust for Life' on Van Gogh. Somehow, among all the books they had the most profound impact on me.



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*'A great book should leave you with many experiences, and slightly exhausted at the end. You live several lives while reading.'* - William Styron

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I recalled my discomfort and anger when our Professor for English quoted from a story: 'artists are weak men'. Both these books highlighted that disturbing aspect about artists, painters and sculptors. The reason it upset me was because my art was something I cherished. My Art teacher at School spotted that talent in me and suggested I join Sir J. J. School of Arts (Mumbai's venerated institution for aspiring Artists). Pencil profile sketches with shading were my forte. I had no formal training, yet my work had quite a few admirers: one portrait done by me had been retained by a noted Cardiologist.



When facing the dilemma of choosing between the easier option and right option, select the one which leads you onto the right path.

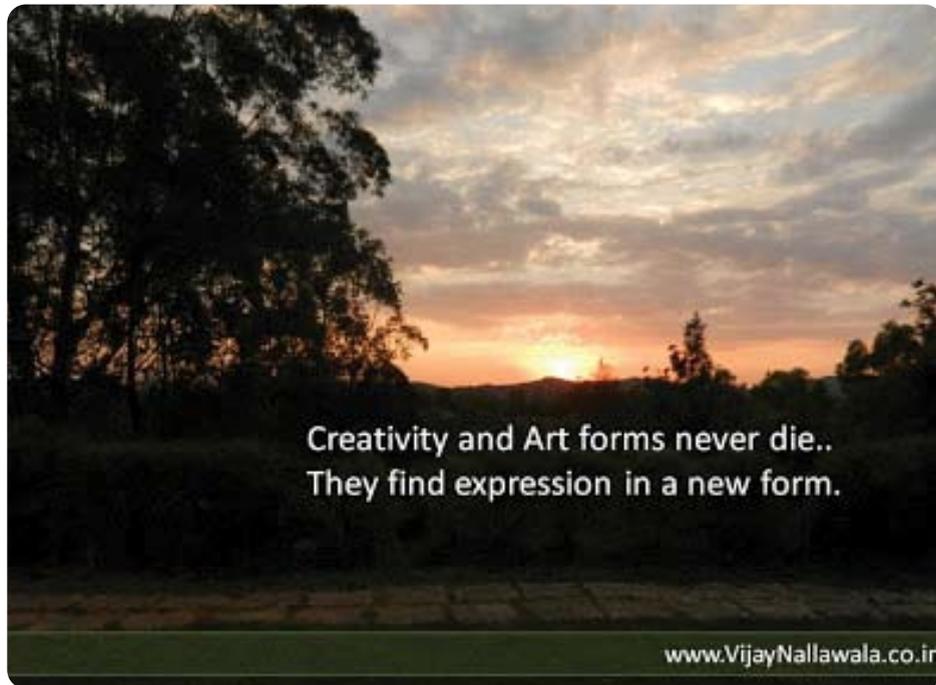
[www.VijayNallawala.co.in](http://www.VijayNallawala.co.in)

I was disturbed by the aspersions cast on artists and indirectly at me: I found an uncanny similarity between the eccentricities of these legends and my own. Subconsciously, I had developed a dislike for artists. One of my strong points (or weak points) is that I don't do things in half measures. I did what an impulsive seventeen year old would do. Overnight, I abruptly gave up all my drawing activities- just like that. Would you believe it, I gave away my most valuable possessions- my art kits, paints, brushes, pencils, et al, to my nephew. I retained not even a sample of my work.

There was a sense of resentment against Sir. My immature mind made me believe he was the person responsible for me giving up what was my finest skill, my obsession.

Today after having been a successful entrepreneur and professional for over three decades, I realise how timely and vital his intervention was. Separated parents mandated that I first and foremost bear my familial responsibility towards mom and my sister. My ailing maternal uncle who had magnanimously supported our family since my childhood, needed to be relieved of the pressures of managing a vast business single-handedly.

I had to adapt myself to what was demanded of me and rightfully expected of me. I would be a coward to shirk this responsibility. **A pragmatic approach towards life meant a huge change from** my earlier self-centred attitude. What I learned while initially assisting my uncle who was a pioneering entrepreneur and as good a family man as you would come across, was priceless.



Slowly but surely, I filled the large shoes given to me.

Do I regret having totally forsaken art, my passion? Financial security, a sense of having been a responsible family man and some gray hair bringing much needed wisdom, are irreplaceable. Wisdom to realise that the two books given by Sir had changed the course of my life: for the better.

There's always the right time for everything. Destiny has its ways. God has now given me this glorious opportunity to express myself in another creative form: **Writing. I've taken to it like a fish to water!** If Books brought about a transformation in me, am excited about returning the favour!



Vijay Nallawala, is a Writer and **Blogger** with interests in Personal Branding, **Social Media**, Personal Development, Spirituality, Personal Finance and Economics. He managed a family business for seven years. A successful entrepreneur and pioneer in the Multimedia equipment rentals arena for fourteen years. Until recently, he was a financial advisor for eight years.

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The Accidental  
Entrepreneur  
Who Soared  
the Skies



# The Accidental Entrepreneur Who Soared the Skies

## Janet Amirault



Janet Amirault shares her story of how she became an entrepreneur by accident, and later received several awards too. She also shares her childhood and values which played a critical role in what she is today.

When I was about 14 years old, my father told me that I could likely be a “gal Friday” managing an office. He visualized a doctor’s office or something similar. In the late 1960s these would have been the only powerful professional women that he would have encountered. My mother had grown up in Germany, during World War II, and felt that a woman’s place was in the home.

My view was that I was going to work for a living. I worked around the clock - at school, as a near straight A student and in fast food, so that I could afford college. The disciplined habits of learning and work have stayed with me throughout my life.

At 16, I subscribed to Ms. Magazine. It opened my eyes to the legal and societal barriers that lay ahead in my journey as a female. It helped me to set realistic expectations. My father, also an avid reader, always read the magazine before I did. He supported me with my choices. My mother always worried that I did too much.

In the 1970s in the U.S.A., Gloria Steinem and others were leading the women’s movement. Barriers to women were primarily credit, promotion, equal pay for equal work and respect for our contributions.



In my 16th year, I read Jonathan Livingstone Seagull, a story about a seagull seized by a passion for flight. He pushes himself everyday to learn everything he can about flying. Since he refuses to conform to the written rules governing the flock, he is ostracized. On another plane of existence, he gathers others around him who have been ostracized for not conforming.

Armed with this work experience and vision, I went into the corporate world and rose up the career chain. My primary talent was the ability to explain complex topics easily while engaging teams of other non-conforming technologists to deliver systems large and small.

One day, when confronted with unethical business decisions in a large bank, I chose like Jonathan to finally leave the corporate flock of office cubes. Seeing people choose to benefit themselves rather than choose to do what was best for the company, I asked to be laid off from my job. At the time, I was the primary wage earner and 3 months pregnant with my second child.

As a result of leaving the flock, I chose to join a small company to see if I could make a difference with a small yet more entrepreneurial firm. For 18 months I worked with this first time entrepreneur to professionalize our services for our corporate customers. He asked me to become his Chief Operating Officer. We negotiated for six months. I refused any additional compensation and insisted on the right to give back the job.

Three days after the announcement of my promotion, the founder had a heart attack. In the next few months, he was in the hospital 14 times as the heart bypasses failed. I was thrust into the role of COO and CEO, and focused on learning sales and marketing. In the first year, I drove our first profit, while increasing sales by 10%. And 18 months after thriving through the crisis, I agreed to become the managing partner and run the firm.

For 8 years, I learned to set a vision and build a team that believed in serving clients and consultants in win-win ways. It was far from easy, but the business was growing geographically and financially.

And then disaster struck me. I had a major stroke caused by a genetic anomaly. The stroke left me without the ability to read and write, and with only 100 words that I could speak in two word sentences. I had no short-term memory and had lost a host of long-term memories. The health emergency of the former CEO had prepared me to create self managed teams. I was very aware of being the single point of failure, so had set the stage for continuing the firm, with or without me.

After 6 weeks of disability leave, I returned to the firm with more than one disability. At the same time, I learned from everyone and every research study how to recover all of my functions. I am now in the 10% of those who have a stroke who fully recover. I received the honor of being the Small Business Administration's Small Business Person of the Year in Maryland based on financial results as well as the Innovator of the Year, due to innovations we delivered for clients. Only 1.6% of USA women owned businesses break the 1 million dollar barrier and we are in that select group.

My children are the most important people in my life. Like my father, I have sought to nurture their talents and encourage their professional dreams. As Richard Bach writes in Jonathan Livingstone Seagull "Don't believe what your eyes are telling you. All they show is limitation. Look with your understanding. Find out what you already know and you will see the way to fly."



Janet Amirault is CEO, Software Consortium and is based in Baltimore, Maryland. Software Consortium is focused on helping clients develop software solutions, serving the private and public sector. Janet, as CEO, was awarded Small Business Person of the Year in 2012, has been featured in the Washington Post, Inc. magazine, SmartCEO for her and her team's accomplishments. [Learn more about Janet here](#)

11

So Ladies &  
Gentlemen,  
What's  
Your Story?



# So Ladies & Gentlemen, What's Your Story?

## Peter Sterlacci



Japan's Personal Branding Pioneer & game changer, Peter Sterlacci begins with the power of storytelling and how storytelling is different from elevator pitch. He then shares his personal mission through a video.

### So, what's your Story?

Just recently I was at a networking event and someone approached me and asked, "So, what's your story?" I was expecting the standard, "So where you you work?" or "So what do you do?". But I now had the opportunity to communicate my story, my character, my why! How exciting!

For many of us this question is likely to catch us off guard and yet nowadays it is our story that has the remarkable power to define who we are and how we are uniquely different from everyone else.

Nobody has the same story. We might be able to identify with elements of other people's stories, but in the end our story is our own. My good friend and fellow personal branding expert Walter Akana says our stories makes up our 'brand DNA' - they form the code that makes us who we authentically are.



# Your Story is Not Your Pitch!

People tend to equate their elevator pitch to their story. I firmly believe this is wrong.

A good elevator pitch is designed to persuade or convince someone to want to know more about our product or service. The end result is ideally a sale. Our story leads others wanting to know more about us. The end result is a belief in who we are. Story guru Michael Margolis expresses it perfectly when he says that "Your story is your brand. You have to get others to believe and identify with your story. When you can so that the need to persuade, convince, or sell disappears."

I love the fact that Amit has decided to dedicate a blogathon solely to the power of story. Humans are naturally drawn to stories which means Amit is giving the world the opportunity to be drawn to the 30 stories he is curating here. I invite you to connect with me and my story!

So, what's MY Story? Watch below.

[http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player\\_embedded&v=mOHwE1u2EQk](http://www.youtube.com/watch?feature=player_embedded&v=mOHwE1u2EQk)



Known as Japan's Personal Branding Pioneer", Peter Sterlacci is a sought-after speaker, trainer, and consultant about using personal branding to enhance career and life success. He is one of 15 Master level Reach-Certified Personal Branding Strategists in the world. His company, **BeYB**, is introducing a leading global personal branding methodology to careerists, corporations, and universities in Japan. Follow Peter on **Twitter@PeterSterlacci**

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Lessons  
in a  
Liquor Store



# Lessons in a Liquor Store

Kathy L. Kirk



Applied Spirituality expert Kathy L. Kirk shares her unusual story of the lessons she learnt, while running a liquor store which later helped her find her life purpose. Lessons at a liquor store what?.....find out for yourself.

My Ordinary Hero's Journey though this lifetime, like everyone's, has been to remember my 'purpose'. I scratch my head wondering, "Now what was I thinking before I came into 3-D? I know I had a plan – my *raison d'être* – carefully thought out, much like when one decides to go on vacation: when, where, how and why."

Like most humans, I spent the first 30 years or so clueless, just having earthly experiences - from the sublime to horrifying - learning my way around the life on Earth.

When I was 21, I found myself married and living in Southern California owning/operating a liquor store in the worst part of Pasadena. It was a sitcom, "Pollyanna Goes to the City". I had no idea that there was a difference between vodka and gin. I had no concept of one-hour motels. I had no idea of abject poverty. Yet, there I was dispensing daily vices to folks living on food stamps and scams. A funny place to find myself having grown up in a rural middle class lifestyle which knew enough, if not plenty; kindness, if not love; and education if not wisdom.

Never having been in business before, my learning curve was vertical on advertising, marketing, employees, products, bookkeeping and accounting equally with human nature. I was literally thrown into the deep end of the ocean.



Every day I opened, the store at 6 am. To my dismay, there would be street people, whom I had never seen before, sleeping in the doorway waiting for me to open so they could buy their pint of Thunderbird for sixty-nine cents. They were unwashed and unkempt; and smelled badly. To all outward appearances, they were frightening and useless. Yet, every morning I saw them much as you might see the characters in your play: the bus driver, the valet who parked your car, the barista at Starbucks...these were the characters that greeted me each morning. Later on, the working folks stopped by for their lunch sandwich, morning beer, whiskey and cigarettes. I was a stranger in a strange land.

I didn't realize it at the time, but these were my teachers in disguise. So initially I approached them as though they had everything to learn from me. I knew a better way to live; obviously they did not. I felt duty-bound to help.

I listened to their stories. I offered compassion and love. I passed out NA and AA cards. One Christmas I delivered a fully decorated Christmas tree to a house that I knew had no money, no father and no hope for a Christmas. I gave and gave with no discernible progress. The parade of desperation and broken people seemed endless.

At day's end, I would go to my home – safe and warm with plenty of food if not so much love now – and write in my journal, asking deeper questions about life. How does it work?

Then one morning, a man that waited for me each morning made a comment, “Everyone makes their own life.” My head swiveled about. I'd heard the answer to my question from this seemingly pathetic creature. I started to ask him more, but he winked reverting back to his street person persona and incoherent ramblings. But I had heard him.

As days went by, I continued writing my questions in my journal and with increasing frequency I heard them answered through various people throughout my day. I pondered this phenomenon. How do they know what I needed to hear?

I had four years of being taught by those who most people don't even see. I learned that Source speaks through the path of least resistance, always answering me personally. I learned that all paths have purpose. I learned that all are teachers and angels in disguise. I learned to never judge a book by its cover. I learned that everyone is a complete Godkit on his or her perfect mission on planet Earth.

I provided sandwiches and milk. When I learned humility, others provided me with direct answers from the Universe. I learned that we are all in this together for our Good.

It only looked like I was running a business; I was remembering my purpose - Applied Spirituality™.



Kathy L. Kirk is a Consciousness Bridge and Creator/Founder of Applied Spirituality™ - a body of work synthesized over 30 years observing the Human Spirit interface in the body/mind and its application/effects in Life to understand how we create our physical reality naturally. A graduate of Cornell University, she is an author of two books, **Well Done – A Story of Applied Spirituality**, and **The Earthling's Quick Start Guide**. Kathy is a powerful and inspirational speaker to diverse groups and host to **A New View of Life Radio Show**. She gives Seminars and Workshops and does group/private coaching. Mother of two grown sons, she lives in Medina, Ohio. [www.appliedspirituality.com](http://www.appliedspirituality.com)

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"The One  
with  
The Voice"



## “The One with The Voice”

# Isabella Mader



*Isabella Mader shares her story of how she lost her most powerful skill (voice) and how she successfully overcame the trauma.*

At a Conference in Vienna I had to give a speech on platforms and business models. The conference room was full – and the audience heard some strange, very rough, still not very loud but really bass voice coming out of a blonde, slim woman. Some of the audience didn't know me but later on the aisles I heard people talking to each other „the one with the voice brought interesting aspects ...“. I thought that, well „the one with the voice“ must be me then.

Flashback: Some time in late 2010 I was hosting panel discussions at a large 2 day conference and found it hard to bring out the clear voice I was used to. I did have a cough since August and thought it might well be I was not fully fit yet. Guess I should have another few quiet days to rest.

The next day I suddenly did not have any voice at all. So I thought, okay, let's take it slow, you live on this voice, lecturing at universities, speaking at conferences, moderating ... take good care of this voice and give it a rest. This is what I did. Inhalation, warm scarfs through the night, honey, thyme, medication ... Trust me, I had them all. Effect: nex ... nothing, no change.



Long story short: in May the year after, after it got worse and worse and some already suspected cancer I was sent to the hospital. To my friend I said: I think I need Dr. House. Tell me ,bout it: I did meet the real Dr. House. An ingenious surgeon, infection specialist, drew quite a large range of blood samples and had them tested for ...I don't know what. Everything. Some younger colleagues looked at this lot and said „Why so many, who needs this?“. Well, it turned out it was needed – because the clue was exactly in those tests, he found what it was. A very rare resistant type of bacteria was busy eating me up. It had started „eating“ at the vocal cords and had made its way into the lungs already. I was sent to a sonar check, the surgeon who saw this large „hole“ in my lungs had this shocked expression on his face saying „you're not going to make it“ – he really said: „You're in the best hands“.

Back with Dr. House I first had an operation by another ingenious TNE surgeon, the female Dr. House, doing the impossible saving my voice eventually ... and we started a rough medical therapy that was supposed to affect my eye sight and the liver and the nervous system. Dr. House said: „We are going to throw these germs with canons until we can be sure they're dead.“ – with a little reservation „... but of course what is dangerous for the germs isn't going to be fun for you either.“ I did feel like an 80 year old woman during the time ... 6 months therapy. But I had set my mind that I would win. After the 6 months the final checkup and lab tests: Dr. House emailed them to me, expressing that the results were surprisingly good – not a single test result was outside the recommended healthy range! Typical Dr. House: „Your lab results display a certain cheekiness: how dare you be so healthy?“

This was 16 months ago. Asked many times afterwards „Oh poor you, you must have suffered ... taking away the voice that you earn your living with ...“ and so forth - I still fail to see why I should be depressed. So I am not. To me this turned out as a major source of strength and relativizes a lot of pseudo problems we have in life.

Ever after I now find myself looking at challenges with greater ease and a few days ago a colleague from a project said: „Maybe this explains your chilled management style.“ I found the expression very entertaining and charming.

Asked by a student, himself in a personal crisis, if this wasn't a really hard burden I said „Well, it was tough, but I found many beautiful people as new friends who I would have never met, I proved to myself that miracles can happen if you trust they can and my view of problems has a new perspective. Problems suddenly look rather small compared to what I've seen already. And: it could have been worse, so I am happy having this „problem“: I survived it.“

I like to view it like Viktor Frankl who was asked by his students how they can be respected – they do not have such an extraordinary destiny like he managed to live through. He said to them: Look, everyone has his own greatest problem or life challenge. Find it, solve it. This will qualify you and earn you the respect you deserve. As long as you make recommendations second hand while your own problem remains unsolved – you will not have the depth and trust you need for your profession. Go out, find your greatest problem and solve it.“ I can say: Yes, it is so. Solving your greatest problem adds so much substance that it feels like you have more gravity, and gravity draws more and more great people into your life and it becomes more interesting every day. The best thing is that suddenly your advice is of more value to others, because they KNOW you made it, you did it yourself and it is possible. So it becomes possible for them, too.

I want to thank all the great people who cared and helped on the way. The very best way to express it came as a message from a dear friend, thank you Klement – he'd sent this quote by Charles Bukowski: "What matters most is how well you walk through the fire."



Isabella Mader is CEO of NetHotels AG, university lecturer and public speaker with a main focus on IT strategy, communications, knowledge management, media literacy and business development. Recently, she has been awarded top CIO of the year 2013 in Austria. Before her current position she used to act as a programme director for a Master of Science Programme (Communications 2.0) at Danube University Krems while running her own consulting firm. Her academic background is Business Administration and she holds a masters degree in Strategic Information Management. She co-authored two books, one on Blended Learning 2.0 (Technology & Collaboration) and one on Business Networking with Social Media.

She used to work for the Vienna Municipality in the field of communication & information for more than 10 years and for the United Nations in the field of methodology development for several years. Her main focus lies in strategy development, where she still acts as an advisor to a limited number of public and corporate clients.

**Learn more about Isabella here.**

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# The Creation of Runa Magnus



# The Creation of Runa Magnus

## Runa Magnusdottir



Runa Magnusdottir, shares her story of how she created the Runa Magnus brand, the international leadership and personal branding lecture and seminar leader.

The Creation of Runa Magnus – the international leadership & personal branding lecture & seminar leader.

I was only 7 years old, when I first left home. Frankly I don't remember what happened that day, but I do recall becoming very upset with my mum. Yes, I just had enough, and decided I could not live with this family anymore. Carefully I collected some food to take with me, actually wrapped it in a cloth and put it on a little stick (as I had seen they always did in the cartoons) and out of the door I left. This was it... I was going to go into the big world. Later, as I sat down with my lunch-bag something terrible daunted on me... I realized I was unable to live in this world without the support of my loving parents, I had no roof over my head, I had no money, I had no support. As I realized this cold fact, and walked back home to my loving parents, I made myself a promise; I promised myself that I would do everything I possibly could to be an independent woman.

Much later in life, after running my own businesses, gotten married, had two children, and even later as an independent mum (yes, I could never call myself a single mum!) I realized that the decision I made at the age of 7 was one of my core personal strengths. As with all strengths, they have both positive as well as negative elements. I chose to look at it as a positive strength and have used this natural ability of mine not only to be the leader of my own life, but also to support others to lead their own.



## What are you going to do when you grow up, Runa?

In 2006 I sold my last business, I stood in front of the question, “Runa, what are you going to do when you grow up?” The coaching industry caught my attention and as I was training myself to become a certified executive coach, I did receive number of coaching sessions myself. It was in these coaching sessions where my deep passion to support women became clear to me. In my business life, traveling worldwide, I've often noticed how common it was to see women entrepreneurs running their business from passion but they felt uncomfortable to promote their products or services. And many of them were simply like I had been for years, extremely busy juggling everything at the same time.

The idea for Connected-Women.com was planted; I wanted to create an online global community where women worldwide could promote their products and services. The site was launched in 2007, and quickly grew. I was thrilled to see women entrepreneurs from 75 countries signed up on the site. However, I also notice a little disturbing fact. About 80% of the women didn't use the platform to promote their brands, as I had envisioned. It was clear to me something was not right. When I researched for the reason why, I got the reply: “I’m not sure how to promote my brand” or “I feel uncomfortable promoting myself” or “I don’t have any good photo of me” or “My Company is so small”

## From Connected-Women to BRANDit & Personal Branding Lecturing & Consulting

I quickly understood a need to support these fabulous women to find their unique spot in the market place, support them to build and communicate with confidence their brand inside- out. In a partnership with one of the leading art-director & designer, Bjarney Ludviksdottir, we founded the personal branding program, **BRANDit**. Our motto is to give our clients the outstanding results, refine the story behind their brand, tools to promote it with confidence and clarity, both on-and off-line, in our special **BRANDit online magazine**. An outcome that later gave us an EU WIIN Award.

My own personal journey to discover my own personal brand, has evolved into transforming other entrepreneurs internationally. Today with my training, coaching, consulting, giving keynotes, seminars and train-the-trainer leadership & personal branding programs, I consider myself having the best job in the world unleashing the entrepreneurs' true potential and discover their unique value in the business world. And of course, moving their brand from an ordinary business to an outstanding brand.



RUNA MAGNUSDOTTIR is an international leadership & personal branding lecturer & seminar leader from Iceland.

As an international transformational speaker, Runa uses her life time experience as an entrepreneur, her “shaken but not stirred” sense of humor with a good dash of passion, to speak, inspire and coach women who want more confidence & happiness in their lives and men who seek to unleash their leadership skills from the inside-out.

Runa is the co-founder of BRANDit the EU Awarded Personal Branding program and founding & Steering Committee member of ATL EUROPE, The Association of Transformational Leaders in Europe.

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Adapting  
to  
Change





Sherry Nouraini shares her story of adapting to change and the lessons she learned on the way.

“It is not the strongest of the species that survives, nor the most intelligent, but the one most responsive to CHANGE”

This is my story of adapting to change.

I got to be what I wanted to be when I grew up.

From the time I was little, I enjoyed questioning the world around me. I grew up to be a scientist, just like I wanted! How many people can say that?

I wish I could say science and I lived happily ever after, but that’s not what happened.

The biotech company, where I worked in research and development, ran out of money and closed its doors. Chances of finding employment elsewhere were slim because:

1.

Funding for biotech companies in the R&D stage dried up

2.

Larger biotech/Pharma companies either scaled down their R&D efforts or out-shored these efforts overseas.

I had two choices, either to wait for things to get better, or find something else. I chose the latter.



## Not all open doors are created equal

While working in the biotech scene, I had gained some experience writing patent applications, and found patent work quite intellectually stimulating. Soon after I was handed a lay off notice, I started studying for and later on wrote and passed the patent bar exam, which allowed me to look for work in patent law firms. During one job interview, I was told directly by a hiring manager that being in a position of having to deal with childcare made me an unreliable proposition for a law firm. I came to the ugly realization that the legal field was not probably the best choice for me, so the search for a better place continued, I moved on.

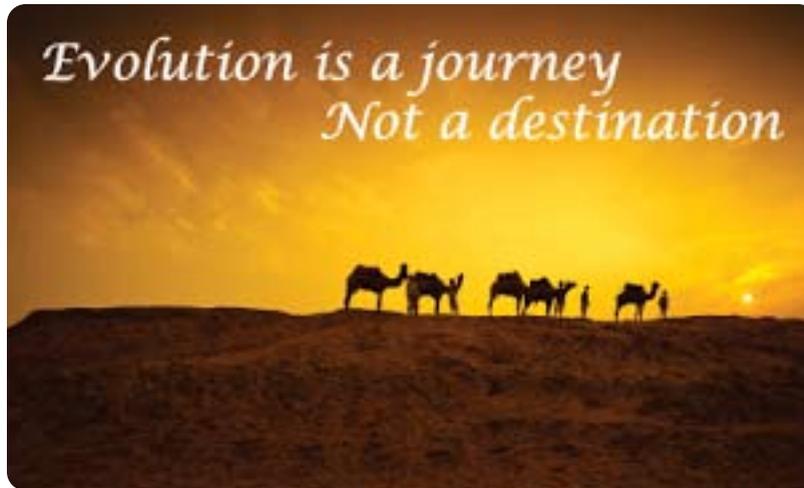
## The road to salvation is not a straight line

In an effort to lead a semi-balanced life, I decided to try running a business from home. Here I was, a nerdy scientist who lived life as an introvert for many years, trying to learn how to start, run, and market a business. To the disbelief of everyone around me, I decided to join a network marketing jewelry business. I did so because I felt I needed a low barrier opportunity to leave planet nerd, get out of my comfort zone, and learn how to be outgoing. Towards that goal, I entered the business networking scene, but to my dismay, I found the environment as unwelcoming to family commitments and motherhood as the legal industry. However, this time, I set out to create an environment where I set the rules.

I established a mom-friendly business networking/education organization, which I called Mom Business Associates (MBA).

MBA grew rapidly. I got coverage in the San Diego Business Journal and other local publications, and expanded my efforts to 4 chapters in Southern California. Out of MBA was also born my next adventure, the Moms in Business Unite (MIBU) Conference, which was founded by myself and four amazing moms who were MBA members.

Through my various ventures, I learned a lot about traditional and online marketing, including social media. I loved social media because it presented something that I found magical: It was very similar to doing scientific research. There was always something new to learn, it required a lot of trial and error, and in some ways it was really geeky because it was somewhat data driven. After 4 years of searching and trying different things, I found what I wanted to be when I grew up for the second time. I decided to focus my efforts on social media education, consulting and management, and Captive Touch was born!



## Evolution is a journey, not a destination

So, what is the lesson here? If you find yourself in a position that turns your life upside down, know that you are only limited by the boundaries set by your comfort zone. Embrace that fact that the only constant in life is change, and that your evolution is a journey, not a destination.



**Sherry Nouraini** is Founder/President of **Captive Touch**, a social media education, consulting and management agency. She is also the Founder and Host of **Open Social Media Initiative**, a weekly live broadcast where she and her colleagues provide free and open education on the art and science of social media. Sherry also teaches marketing via social media at University of San Diego Extension.

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Know Your  
Life Purpose  
&  
Then Write  
An Inspiring Story



# Know Your Life Purpose & Then Write An Inspiring Story

## Tom Grimshaw



Tom Grimshaw shares how he helps his clients discover their passion and life purpose. He uses very simple yet practical approach which helps people become clear at what is the best contribution they can make to our world.

At age 23, I became a commissioned salesman.

In my sales tools there was a graphic that was reputed to be the result of a Harvard study of 100 young men leaving university at age 25 and their path through life. At age 25, most had no idea of what they wanted to do in life, four had pretty clear, unwritten goals and one had clearly defined, written goals.

The story goes that at age 65, 1 was rich, 4 were wealthy, 5 were still working, 18 were dead and 72 could not support themselves, they would need government assistance or charity to survive.

No prizes for guessing the punch line, “If you fail to plan you are planning to fail.”  
Did I follow this advice? No.

Am I the poorer for it? Financially yes.

But then making a lot of money was not on my basic purpose line and never a goal.

So, my recommendation to you, dear reader, is this; If you want to attain your goals, work out what they are and write them down, clearly and concisely.



In order to help you set goals, it is advisable to work out what is your basic purpose. What product it is you would get the most satisfaction from producing.

A young lad came to do some work for me as a computer programmer. After two days I could see that he would never make it as a programmer. I shared this insight with him and asked him if he knew his basic purpose in life. He did not. I helped him using technique 3 below and within a week, he had embarked on a career much more aligned with his basic purpose.

Apparently, talent, personality and basic purpose are a package. I sometimes observe that when a person is working on their basic purpose, progress is like a hot knife through soft butter and when they are not, it's like walking through molasses in winter.



I have a couple of techniques I use to help people work out what their basic purpose is in life and get them moving in that direction.

One technique is to get them to list all the talents on the left side of a piece of paper and on the right side, to list their personality characteristics. I then get them to look over the two lists to see what basic purpose that combination of talents and personality characteristics would move them forward.

Another technique is to look at all the things in the past at which they have excelled or thoroughly enjoyed and get into communication with them about what purpose they had at the time or what purpose would align with that activity.

Yet another technique is to explain the concept that each occupation has a beingness associated with it (BE), the person performs certain actions (DO) to produce a product (HAVE). For instance Be = baker, Do = bake and Have = bread.

I then ask them to make a list of 50 occupations.

That done, I ask them to write next to each occupation what product each produces.

I then get them to put a line through each that they would not consider doing.

Similarly, to put a line through each that they are currently not suited or could not get themselves qualified to do by physical or mental capacity, education, funds etc.

I then ask them to look over the remaining items and put a tick next to the profession-product combinations they would most enjoy doing-producing.

If there is one occupation or product that they are grossly more interested in than the rest, there's the one that's best suited. And I ask them what purpose creating that product would satisfy.

Otherwise, I get them to pick a couple of occupations and get into communication with them with the purpose of finding out what the income potential is, the qualifications required to start, the number of positions available etc.

The more into communication you get with an area, the better you can make an informed judgement.

Then it becomes a lot easier to set your goal in life directly aligned to your basis purpose.

You will still find times when you lack motivation... .. but I'm over my word count.



Tom Grimshaw's basis purpose is "To Understand"

His secondary purpose is "To bring others up to understanding."

His product in life is, "A more aware being."

He has interests in software development, making the healthiest food in the world and has written a book on How To Live The Healthiest Life.

email [tom@tomgrimshaw.com](mailto:tom@tomgrimshaw.com)

facebook [www.facebook.com/tom.grimshaw](http://www.facebook.com/tom.grimshaw)

google+ <https://plus.google.com/b/112834713507528417378/112834713507528417378/posts>

linkedin <http://www.linkedin.com/pub/tom-grimshaw/4/8b8/894>

twitter [#thomaslgrimshaw](https://twitter.com/thomaslgrimshaw)

worldtruth <http://www.worldtruth.org/tom-grimshaw/>

blog [www.tomgrimshaw.com/tomsblog](http://www.tomgrimshaw.com/tomsblog)

book [www.howtolivethehealthiestlife.com](http://www.howtolivethehealthiestlife.com)

newsletter [www.tlat.net](http://www.tlat.net) nutrition [www.healthelicious.com.au](http://www.healthelicious.com.au)

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Laughter's  
Life Lessons



## Laughter's Life Lessons

# Debbie Friend



Laughter Yoga expert shares her story about how she became a laughter yoga leader. So let us learn to live, LAUGH, love....

“I’m going to be trained to be a laughter yoga leader, “my friend enthusiastically declared during a phone conversation we were having. “That’s great,” I answered. Without missing a beat, she then asked, “Why don’t you do this with me?” My mouth must have been on auto-pilot, because before my brain had a chance to process what was being requested of me, I accepted her invitation. After I committed to this undertaking, I wondered what on earth possessed me to answer in the affirmative.

When the day of the workshop arrived, I was extremely apprehensive and worried obsessively about what I had gotten myself into and why I was doing this.

I quickly discovered that my fears were unfounded. The session was taught by Sebastian Gentry, a handsome Frenchman, who spoke with a very thick, sexy accent. His tone was mesmerizing and the content of his speech was captivating.

Gentry shared with our group how he had previously been a successful businessman who had worked hard and made a very good living. While he had all the trappings of what should have been a happy life, his was the opposite. Needing to find greater meaning and purpose in his existence, Gentry gave it all up, traveled to India and immersed himself in studying laughter yoga with Dr. Madan Kataria, the practice’s creator. Gentry then set off on a new path and began teaching laughter yoga throughout the world.



The lessons I learned during that training session were invaluable, eye opening and life-changing. I discovered that laughter yoga, which is a body mind exercise, teaches the body how to laugh without relying on jokes or humor. One doesn't have to be happy, be in a good mood or have a sense of humor in order to reap the many rewards. Numerous physical, mental and emotional benefits result from regular bouts of mirthful laughter. Best of all, anyone can do it, anywhere and at any time.

I also learned so much more...about people...about life ...and about how to cope with it all. We were taught that life in itself has no meaning. We give meaning to life. Happiness is a choice. Sadness is a choice as well. We all go through hard times. How we handle situations and deal with what comes our way is our decision and is determined by our attitudes, beliefs and desires. Pain is inevitable. Suffering is optional. If we are able to laugh at our circumstances, ultimately, we'll be able to cope with them. Laughing at what we go through doesn't minimize the magnitude of or make light of its significance. Instead, laughter allows us to gain a new perspective and attain fresh insight into how to deal with and get through the dilemma. These powerful lessons changed me as well as shifted the direction my life was going.

Now I teach laughter yoga to a wide range of audiences. Of course, I practice what I preach and laugh as often as possible... because a hearty laugh is life's powerful gift to us meant to be savored during the good times as well as used to cushion the sadness during the hard, trying times.



Debbie Friend is the founder and CEO of LifeCurrents, a company which promotes wellness and healthy living through its educational, enjoyable and highly-effective stress management and laughter yoga programs. Services are provided in corporations, schools, spas, non-profits and in the special-needs community. Debbie was recently featured in the book, *The 7 Joys Of Life*, as a contributing thought leader on laughter yoga.

Website: [www.lifecurrents.net](http://www.lifecurrents.net)

Twitter: [@FriendDebbie](https://twitter.com/FriendDebbie)

LinkedIn: [www.linkedin.com/in/debbiefriend1](http://www.linkedin.com/in/debbiefriend1)

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Soul's  
True Journey





Well known spiritualist and storyteller Dhara Kothari shares a story of a soul. Let me keep the details secret and not spoil the climax.

Let me tell you a story.....

There was once a soul that had made a long arduous journey through space and time, then finally rested to contemplate on finishing the final leg of its journey. Its home was high in the dimensional ladder where it rested.

The final journey, the final climb, would be difficult the soul recognized it, but what's hard for you and I was not the same for this soul. You see the final part of the journey is not physical but purely spiritual. It is like solving a riddle, whose answer is right there but not visible as yet.

What could be the answer? What was the last piece of block that needed to be removed?

The soul decided it needed to be in absolute solitarily boundary to be able to solve the final riddle. This was possible only through restrictive movement. To cut off all urges and emotions, to throw the final dice on the life's board game of Moksh Patam or Gyan-bazi. Life after all was just a game, a game of emotions being played and the dices were the karmic influencers.



The soul then walked into a garden and decided to spend an entire day. One day of that dimension could be stretched to as many years on Earth. It could be one lifetime or several. But this soul set a day spend in meditation would equal to one Earthly life, and that too not a long one. The one day of absolute and pure meditation would remove any other pending obstacles, and the realization would then shine forth.

Living a life on Earth was a gamble, a dangerous risk the soul had ventured into.

After reaching the spiritual heights, going back was fraught with dangers that could undo everything realized so far. It was a test, a penance, a challenge to live on the Earthly plane and yet not waver from its true destination. If the soul could pass through this, it knew the road would then be straight and the final dimension just ahead. The soul became like the arrow that needed to be pulled back a little on the bowstring, to be released to hit the mark accurately and swiftly. The bowstring pull back was the one life on the middle plane, the Earth.

The soul was born on Earth amidst chaos. It was side-tracked for a while but always knew it was different, not meant to be there but was present. The Earthly environment was not conducive for the soul. Despite all odds, it had to survive. The challenges were however, bigger than the soul had anticipated but several years into the life; the complete awareness dawned on the soul. The reason, the purpose, the goal, everything. It had already started walking on the spiritual path being on Earth, but the dawning of the right awareness made all the difference.

Now the soul has decided that though the time is short, it must not waver from its final end. The final years have begun, the purpose will soon be achieved, in matter of time.

This soul is none other than the author herself, who has started a spiritual platform called Spiritual Lounge, to spread awareness of true spirituality, to heal people and to guide them to their realization the way it is meant to be. This soul is only a medium, every journey, every path is as unique as the person themselves. They create, they walk or fly and in time realize its own self. Come let's together become a little more spiritual! Let us find our-self! Because that is all that truly matters.



Dhara Kothari is a professional writer, spiritualist, storyteller, game designer/creator. Based in Mumbai, wishing to travel the world to spread the message of true spirituality and telling stories.

**Learn more about Dhara here.**

**You may also visit <http://spirituallounge.com/>**

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Cooptetion-  
A Lesson  
Everyone Needs



# Cooptetion - A Lesson Everyone Needs

## Dr Prashant Gupta



Dr Prashant talks about the importance of cooptetion and tells a short story to prove his point. (Do let us know if he was able to prove it successfully)

### Cooptetion - A necessity today

A new term was added in management jargon years back-cooptetion, which is a combination of cooperation and competition. In the social media age we live in, we often have overlaps of skills with people around us, and how we collaborate with such people is going to be a critical skill in our success. For example, a life coach may be a competitor to a psychiatrist as people with stress or obsessive compulsive disorder may visit either of them.

### From cooptetion to mutual admiration

Let me share a childhood story. Dr Amit Nagpal (the organiser of the story blogathon) and I were class-fellows in school and academically we were competitors. Yet we would come together to jointly organize cultural activities ranging from school farewells to magic shows to stamps and coins exhibitions. (and sometimes our other classfellows were jealous due to the close cooperation and trust we imposed in each other). We organized social welfare activities too (Our peace and environment exhibition was a huge success in school days).



One day, I was reflecting upon the fact that why were we successful at cooperation in spite of being competitors? In my view, there were four primary reasons:-

1.

We defined boundaries of cooperation and competition well.

2.

We worked with trust when we collaborated.

3.

We had mutual admiration and found each other's company intellectually stimulating.

4.

We acted with maturity and were never really jealous of each other.

Collaboration requires trust and competition requires secrecy and we saw the logic of cooperation very clearly (without getting emotional about the fierce academic competition between us). We used to chat for hours at night and then drop each other half way back home.

## From mutual admiration to mutual inspiration

We have been good friends since then and we continue to inspire each other. We both had a strong inclination to evolve and grow in life and still celebrate each other's company. If I inspire Dr Nagpal for physical fitness (your words may carry weight Dr Nagpal, but your body needs to lose weight), he inspires me to aspire for personal development. So dear readers we have created a new concept-"Mutual Inspiration Club" and hope it continues, till death do us part.



Dr Prashant Gupta is a pathologist by profession and a learner by passion. He loves to dabble in spirituality, medicine, inspiration and when in extreme mood in philosophy. **Learn more about him here**

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Follow  
Your  
Dreams



## Follow Your Dreams

# Lipsa Mohanty



Lipsa Mohanty shares her story of how she shifted from stressful Monday mornings to beautiful Monday mornings. She also shares, how she was finally able to follow her dreams.

### Follow Your Dreams or else be ready for the Monday morning

The alarm rings ... a stressful Monday Morning again!

With my eyes still closed, I tried to stretch my hands and reach my phone to shut it off and buy more time to sleep. While I gripped the phone as though it was an assault weapon and pushed it under the pillow, the phone rang with the second alarm. With one eye still closed and one eye open, I took the phone out from under the pillow to check the time. It was time for the marathon again.

I literally pushed myself out of the bed, somehow managed to get ready in minutes. The newspaper and breakfast had no place in my day as the cab was about to be there anytime.

The previous day had been tough, long hours and a day packed with heated arguments and discussions in the office. I was in no mood to go to office but not having any choice in hand, just dumped myself in the backseat of the car heading to my client's place.



The drive from my place to the client's place was a good hour drive. The weather was pleasant outside as it had rained the night before and I had to catch the Mumbai express high way. Undoubtedly the drive was pleasant but my mind was not. The phone rang and the caller id flashed "Dad". It was like a piece of ice on a burnt area of your body as I anticipated it to be a call from my boss. Even before I could say a hello ... the first line that came was "Dad I am tired ... Can't take it anymore ... I don't know what to do ... I don't think I ever wanted this for myself."

Listening to this the only response that I got in return from my father was "Follow your Dreams" ending with a soft and warm tone. Those three words sounded like magic. Tears of joy, compassion and a reassured feeling of comfort and security started rolling down my cheeks. I did make my feelings obvious to him.

That one hour turned out to be the most crucial times of my life. And three questions hit me: Was this the lifestyle I wanted? Is this the work which I would love doing till my last breath? Will I be happy to see myself after few years down the line?

Answers to all the questions came to be a clear 'NO'.

It was a struggle to accept this 'NO' because my mind was very happy to dominate me. For a change, my heart was trying to speak louder than the mind. I knew I had different dreams.

It was the magical moment, when my heart could finally shut my mind off. To my surprise, the very next moment all my fears, apprehensions, negativity just vanished and powerful thoughts of creativity, ambition and aspirations came from nowhere.

The car stopped near the gate. Untill then I had no clue what would be my next action. I got out of the car, walked towards the check gate, walked up to the reception area heading towards the conference room. I was a complete robot. I was now at ease and with no mental noise.

I opened my laptop and opened my mail box. The mouse automatically went to the “compose” button and I typed “I quit” and the very next moment I saw it in my sent items.

I had no clue what happened. All I know was it was a beautiful Monday morning!



Lipsa Mohanty is Founder, Corporate-a-sramah, a platform to explore, discover and understand the concept of Science, Spirituality & Management. It organizes and facilitates talks by and with Leaders and Experts. She is based in New Delhi, India. **Learn more about Lipsa here**

# Epilogue



So you must have understood the power of storytelling by now, but if you still have doubts then I have two stories of mine, which have really contributed to my success.

These stories include a success story of a personal branding coaching client and a story of collaboration with my coach Jennifer.

## She Found Her Gift and Gave It Away - Dr Sonica Krishan's Story



### Background

I met Dr Sonica via social media and her passion for Ayurveda impressed me instantly. We got connected and I noticed that she had the zeal, passion and expertise required for mega success. All that she needed to do was to share her success stories and develop a strong reputation for her skills. In fact she already had written 3 books on Ayurveda, 2 of which are available on [Amazon](#), which were published by Rupa & Co, a reputed Indian publisher. (Herbal Healers, Home Remedies and Healing through Ayurveda).

In our very first Skype chat she told me, “Right from the childhood days I was passionate about becoming a doctor and wanted to heal and nurture people. Later, when I grew up, I compared Allopathy, Ayurveda and other systems of medicine and found that Ayurveda was the best medicine system because of the rare side-effects and the focus on [healing the root cause of disease](#). Hence I decided to enroll for an Ayurveda degree right after my high school.”

She added, “It was only during my studies that I started realizing the immense power of Ayurveda and developed a deep interest in the subject. Over the next few years I realized Ayurveda is my deepest passion and hence I have sustained my interest in Ayurveda. “ (Picture-Dr Sonica Krishan's book in a book shop in the reputed Ambience Mall, Gurgaon)

Her association with Ayurveda is now about 25 years old, and she finds joy in healing people and advising them about the merits of preventive healthcare. Of late she has developed keen interest in Holistic wellness (Healing of Mind, Body and Soul).

## The Three Phases of Coaching

We started working on her social media presence and online branding in March 2012. In the first phase, I conducted need assessment and the client was asked to do a self-analysis. She was already active on Facebook pages and was writing for newspapers and magazines.

I explained the basic concepts like Visibility, Credibility and Profitability and the 4Cs of Social Media (Connect, Converse, Collaborate & Convert (into revenues)). Other basics like art of storytelling, how personal branding works, how to create and build right perception and so on were also explained. The importance of good manners for social media and using soft marketing to create brand pull were also highlighted.



Though we worked together based on my Enlarge Excel Evolve philosophy, Dr Sonica is a wise lady and I only had to suggest practical ways of applying the wisdom on social media too. Then we defined her core competencies and how to align them with her brand values.

In the second phase, I coached her on optimization of the major social media tools like Facebook Page, Twitter, LinkedIn, Blogging, Pinterest and others. Besides optimization we discussed concepts like email signatures, online metrics, collaboration in digital space, content aggregation methods, and role of aesthetics were demonstrated in context with each social media tool. (Picture-Dr Sonica addressing a conference organised by Himalaya Drug company)

We also covered miscellaneous tools like Quora, G+, Gravatar, Boxbe and so on and how to use them from the brand and reputation building perspective. The concepts of elevator pitch, personal portal and how to be interesting on social media were also demonstrated. The client was also advised to learn by observation of my profiles as it may give many ideas also.

We discussed SEO, SEM, SMO and such topics in brief too and how to improve blog traffic in detail. We discussed the art of storytelling in text and pictures. I have also coached her on giving better presentations and public speaking. The art of “Show, Not Tell” is a delicate art of personal branding which we have discussed at all the stages. We also discussed how other doctors and Ayurveda experts are doing personal branding across the world.



(Picture-Dr Sonica reading her contribution to the book, "The 7 Joys of Life" at India International Centre, New Delhi)

In the third phase advanced topics like e-books, brochure design, PPT templates, newsletter, viral marketing, thought leadership, brand integration and ORM (Online Reputation Management) were covered.

We had Skype sessions for one hour every week and I used to load Dr Sonica with homework. Of course I was just an email away in case she had a query. It is a matter of pride to see [Dr Sonica Krishan's](#) work along with Deepak Chopra & Lissa Coffey in Tathaastu, now India's leading wellness and holistic living magazine (launched in US initially).

## Then and Now

Today, she has a very popular Facebook Page (and has total of 5,000 plus likes, followers on her pages). She has a [very popular Blog](#) and her presentation has been even featured on [Slideshare](#) homepage.



Now she writes for a number of leading newspapers, magazines and Pharma journals viz. Hindustan Times, Asian Age, Indian Express, Dainik Bhaskar (Hindi newspaper), The Times of India, and Drug One etc. She keeps getting requests from leading [magazines](#), [Newspapers](#), [onlinemedia](#) and [other media](#) to share her expertise through her articles, and also gets frequent invitations for speaking engagements.

She writes content for a number of websites (Ayurveda niche) including [sites managed by Chopra Centre, USA \(Deepak Chopra\)](#). She has also become Editor for Ayurveda section with ["All Things Healing"](#), a USA website and healing forum.

Dr Sonica is a thorough professional with the right combination of knowledge, skills and attitudes. I always say, “Personal Branding is not a substitute for quality, but is rather a tool to communicate your quality as a person-your knowledge, skills and attitude (KSA). So first develop your KSAs and then demonstrate them wisely.” (Picture-Dr Sonica's column with well known actor Anupam Kher alongside)



Dr Sonica shared her approach, “As Ayurveda and Natural Lifestyle Healer and Consultant, I generally offer guidance and therapy pertaining to patient’s ailment, along with medicines, recommendation of everyday regime/lifestyle as well as fitness training. The lifestyle guidance includes daily diet and activity pattern. At my clinic, I personally take care of pulse examination, thorough discussion with the patient to establish the basic

Prakriti or Natural constitution of the individual. Then begins the quest for combating the Vikruti with herbs and natural ingredients based medicines and supportive therapies for correcting the dosha imbalance.”

She has benefited immensely from the coaching and is focusing on her core competencies of Author, Speaker & Consultant in the field of Ayurveda and holistic healing. She has recently presented at Fortis conference “Cardiomersion 2012- Lifestyle & Surgery” (organised by the reputed Fortis chain of hospitals-See Picture on right), Chandigarh, Institute of Chartered Accountants of India, Chandigarh and so on.



As Picasso rightly says, "The meaning of life is to find your gift. The purpose of life is to give it away." Dr Sonica was fortunate that she found her gift early in life and is giving it away generously too.

Dr Sonica has never shied away in expressing her gratitude. She told during an interview to an online magazine, "I would give much credit to my work present on Social Networking sites to [Dr Amit Nagpal](#), who has patiently and enthusiastically coached me opening up all new ventures of personal branding for me. Thanks to him, as of now, I'm having and monitoring my websites, blogs, facebook, twitter, linkedin accounts and sharing my work efficiently, without much knowledge in this area."



She pointed out to me, "The affection, warm wishes and testimonials which I have received during the journey from my patients and clients has really touched me and inspired me to work even harder." She has been Faculty of Ayurveda at San Diego College of Ayurveda, USA. As she passionately adds value to peoples' lives through her content, it is naturally going viral across the globe. (Picture-Klout considers Dr Sonica, a pundit in her field)

## Holistic Healing

Although being an Ayurveda doctor, as Dr Sonica entered the realm of Holistic healing, she developed the understanding that Healing of body and mind, develops by and large on the magnitude of developing positive vibrations of Spiritual healing. She says, "Writing on the niche' of Spiritual Healing has just come to me un-intentionally, and somehow I realize and believe that holistic wellness can only be achieved when the parameters of all three- Mind, Body and Soul are nourished with complete awareness."

# Master your mind



**DR SONICA KRISHAN**

The writer is an Ayurveda and natural lifestyle healer. She is the author of *Heal Yourself, Heal Others* & *Healing Through Ayurveda*

## Soul search

BECOMING A MASTER OF YOUR BODY AND MIND WOULD MAKE YOU TOUGH AND IN THE LONG RUN REWARD YOU WITH THE ASSETS OF PHYSICAL, EMOTIONAL AND SPIRITUAL FITNESS AND FORBEARANCE



In this thought-provoking and soul-searching column, Dr. Sonica Krishan shares her insights on how to master your mind and body.



THE ACTRESS BELIEVES THAT ONE CAN BE SEXY AS WELL AS SPIRITUAL  
**'God is my friend'**

**ANUSKA SHIRKAR**

I am a spiritual person. I believe in God and I pray to Him every day. I am a very spiritual person. I believe in God and I pray to Him every day. I am a very spiritual person. I believe in God and I pray to Him every day.



As I keep drinking the coffee and eating the biscuits, I feel like I am not really eating. I feel like I am not really eating. I feel like I am not really eating. I feel like I am not really eating.

My God walks with me in my every step of my life and I feel like I am not really eating. I feel like I am not really eating. I feel like I am not really eating. I feel like I am not really eating.

My God walks with me in my every step of my life and I feel like I am not really eating. I feel like I am not really eating. I feel like I am not really eating. I feel like I am not really eating.

Lifestyle ailments like Diabetes, Obesity, Hypertension, Heart disease, Stress etc that are common today as well as highly crucial to deal with cannot be escaped easily without developing conscious detachment both with the predicament as well as its source. For example. losing weight becomes much easier when you have developed internal strength towards refraining from the sweets and fatty foods, than becoming slave to taste-buds. Dr Sonica Krishan writes regularly in well known Speaking Tree Blog <http://www.speakingtree.in/public/sonica.krishan/blog> (Picture-Dr Sonica's regular column in Deccan Chronicle)

As per Dr Sonica's personal experiences total health is only possible through the element of Meditation. She has mentioned in her article- Being Aware is being Alive, [http://www.speakingtree.in/public/spiritual\\_blogs/seekers/science-of-spirituality/being-aware-is-being-alive](http://www.speakingtree.in/public/spiritual_blogs/seekers/science-of-spirituality/being-aware-is-being-alive)

She points out, "Let me tell you about my own experience. I lost weight by a simple process of awareness which I brought about into my diet and lifestyle. Nothing else worked so well! And it has been a valuable lesson for me to share. Introspecting on the subject of cultivating awareness, I can state that increase in consciousness and awareness result in focus on the present."

She has been also writing Spirituality column 'An Other Realm' in Sunday edition of Deccan Chronicle and Asian Age Newspaper. Her own experiences with practical Meditation has brought her closer to the arena of holistic wellness (Healing of Body, Mind and Soul) and this is what she also imparts in her workshops. And when she wants a break from her increasingly hectic work schedules, she has the “[Silent Musings](#)”, which also enlightens the readers with her soothing poetry.



## Giving Back to Society

Dr Sonica is also taking sincere efforts in giving back to society by conducting free camps and similar activities, under the banner of the NGO 'NAYAM'.

As Dr Sonica nears the epitome of her potential and career, she also encourages others to realize their peak potential through the well being of mind-body-soul. Many more miles to go Doc and miles to heal too!

# One Plus One Equals Eleven

## The Power of Collaboration and Community

“Alone I can SPEAK  
But Together We Can TALK  
Alone I Can SMILE  
Together We Can LAUGH.  
Alone I Can ENJOY  
Together We Can CELEBRATE,  
That’s the Beauty Of Togetherness”

- Anonymous

In Hindi, we have a saying that one plus one equals eleven (which highlights the power of collaboration). Jennifer Sertl, (President, [Agility 3R](#), New York), my personal development coach and collaborator has proved it right.

### Heartfelt Collaboration

As far as I remember, we connected sometime in 2008. Soon Jennifer emailed me her poem, "[Teachers are Artists](#)" which really touched me, since I have been a passionate teacher too. Then we exchanged few emails and she gifted me a copy of her book, "[Strategy, Leadership and the Soul](#)." Now I was curious enough for a Skype chat.

In my recent post entitled "[3 Life Lessons that led to Social Media Success](#)" I talked about the need for heartfelt collaboration. My first heartfelt collaboration has probably happened with Jennifer Sertl who has truly inspired the required trust (and inspired me to develop resilience, responsiveness and reflection too).

## Coaching Style

Jennifer's coaching style reminds me of Albert Camus's quote- "Don't walk behind me; I may not lead. Don't walk in front of me; I may not follow. Just walk beside me and be my friend." Her style has influenced my style as a coach too.



Jennifer nudged me to reflect upon my three core values. As she rightly said, "Once we decide our three core values, we can do a self-reflection every week. 'Am I living according to my values? What are the areas I need to improve? What mistakes did I make in these areas?'" as part of the journaling process.

(Picture-Jennifer at SIBOS conference on "The Future of Organisations" at Osaka, Japan)

She keeps repeating the importance of journaling, "Sometimes when creative professionals (especially the ones with a spiritual inclination) are inspired and are flooded with ideas, the journal becomes your filter too. Write everything in the journal before posting on social media. Double check whether it is worth posting and aligned with your three core values (from focus/personal branding perspective)."



## Enlarge Excel and Evolve-A result of a nudge

February 2011. As an upcoming personal branding professional, I was creating and curating content from fields as diverse as storytelling, personal development, and social media and online branding on my social networks. Jennifer nudged me during a Skype chat and asked me about my focus and context.

It set me thinking and I thought hard. Was there a connection among the topics I was talking about? As I reflected, I became clearer and now I needed a framework which could put the pieces together. And then the phrase ‘Enlarge Excel Evolve’ flashed in my mind (representing a holistic approach to personal branding, where personal development is the starting point of the journey.) Here is the detailed story. (Picture-Jennifer with Robert S, Chief Editor, Fast Company)

## The Power of Community

Jennifer has connected me with wonderful people across the world, including [Michael Thallium](#) (Global & Greatness Coach), [Steve Brant](#) (Founder, Trimtab Management Systems), [Brigitte Klawonn](#) (Founder, Brigitte Klawonn IT & Logistics), [Anastasia Ashman](#) (Co-Founder, Global Niche), [Janet Amirault](#) (CEO, Software Consortium), [David Wilcox](#) (Principal, Reach Scale), [Bert-Ola Bergstrand](#) (Co-Founder, Social Capital Forum), [Joris Claeys](#) (Chief Engagement Officer, EcoNVERGE), [Jan Gordon](#) (Founder, Curatti), [Michel Bauwens](#) (President, P2P Foundation), [Timothy Rayner](#), [Ralf Lippold](#) (Co-Founder, HTxA), [John Kellden](#) (Founder, ConversationLab) [Inmaculada VP](#) (Project Manager, Andalucia Emprende), [Faisal Hoque](#) (CEO & Founder, BTM Corporation), [Nigel Cameron](#) (Writer, c-pet.org), [Nancy Lynn Cotter](#) (Founder-Self Worth Coalition), [David Holzmer](#) and the list goes on.



(Picture-Jennifer at Kred Influencer Summit, The Crosby Hotel, New York)

Through her wonderful friends, I have learnt interesting concepts like Global Niche, Wisdom 2.0 conference, Social Capital and so on.

(Picture-screenshot of 'The Huffington Post', world No 1 Blog, where Jennifer is a columnist)



## Still not sure of the exact influence

We can never be sure of the exact influence people have on us because it can be sub-conscious and unconscious too. Jennifer may have also influenced me in indirect, unknown and unconscious ways.

It is a matter of pride to see my coach being mentioned in [Harvard Business Review](#) and [Forbes](#) too.

She is a true [transleader](#), with a genuinely global mindset. When we invited her to address the students of [GD Goenka World Institute](#) & Lancaster University, UK (visiting India for summer camp) through Skype, she gladly accepted the invite and enthralled the students.

She has left an indelible imprint on me, with multi-faceted, and multi-dimensional impressions, some of them I know, some of them I may never know. As C.G. Jung has rightly said, 'The meeting of two personalities is like the contact of two chemical substances: if there is any reaction, both are transformed.'" (Picture-Jennifer as Social Media Ambassador, at Social Innovation Summit, 2013, UNO HQ, New York)

**I am not sure of Jennifer, but I am transformed for sure.**

(Picture-Jennifer as Social Media Ambassador, at Social Innovation Summit, 2013, UNO HQ, New York)





Dr Amit Nagpal is one of the pioneers of **personal branding** in India. He is also an Author, Coach and Speaker. An MBA, PhD, he has also done Advanced Program in Digital Marketing from NIIT/Gutsgo and has more than 15 years of work experience in academics & consulting, and corporates in varied industries including publishing, media and digital marketing/personal branding.

He has a unique approach to personal branding (**Enlarge, Excel and Evolve**) which can be summed up as, “Enlarge as a human being, Excel as a social media being and Evolve as a Personal Brand.” His blog, "**Global Personal Branding 3E**" is internationally popular and is listed on **Alltop.com**. He has contributed to an **international e-book** on Personal Branding which includes 30 personal branding thought leaders from different parts of the world. His personal branding clientele includes entrepreneurs, marketing professionals, leadership / life coaches, doctors and other professionals in India, Spain, Sweden, and South Africa.

He is a much sought after **mentor/speaker** in B-schools, other professional institutions and associations. His name also features among 100 Most Influential Indians online. He has also featured in several **TV, newspaper and online interviews**. He has received international appreciation for his **e-books and blogs** and has been talked about on **empowerradio** and mentioned in **best of the best resources on LinkedIn** (Career Management/Personal Branding).

His article on discovering our deepest passion has been featured on Forbes.com. His book “The 7 Joys of Life” focuses on how discovering our deepest passion helps us in living joyfully. His article on collaboration and inspiring trust through social media has been recently included in an upcoming e-book by well known Canadian Author & Professional Services Marketing coach Larry Easto. He is based in New Delhi, India.

To know more go to <http://www.dramitnagpal.com>

You are welcome to write to him at [amit@dramitnagpal.com](mailto:amit@dramitnagpal.com).



To Follow/Connect on Social Media visit **about.me**

# Recommended Readings



Here is a compilation of best of my blog posts and e-books. Enjoy!!!

## **My Global Niche Revelation**

I had a revelation in the GlobalNiche program.

For two years I've been growing a 'You' centered business in a part of the world where people usually do not draw attention to themselves and certainly not with personal details in a professional setting. ([Read More](#))

## **3 Life Lessons that Led To Social Media Success**

Mark Schaefer gave me this advice on blogging: "Disclosing your own heart and your own story is hard but makes for the best blog posts." I have decided to accept his challenge and tell my story today. It is not easy to tell a story of challenges and failures, but it has made me who I am today and led to what I consider the three components of social media success:

**Mindful Content + Passionate Engagement + Heartfelt Collaboration**

([Read More](#))

## **How to use LinkedIn to Build a Powerful Personal Brand**

Our potential clients, employers, partners and so on first check our LinkedIn profile to verify our education, experience, interests, recommendation and common connections. ([Read More](#))

## **How Personal Branding has Become Easier due to Social Media/Online Tools?**

The concept of Personal Branding was introduced by Tom Peters in 1997, William Arruda popularized the concept all over the world starting in 2001. But offline personal branding was only suitable for the upper class / richer countries. ([Read more](#))

## **Spirituality, Social Media and Personal Branding**

Spirituality and personal branding-what the hell are you talking, you have gone bonkers", you must be thinking this. Before you curse me further, let me explain this. ([Read more](#))

## **7 Personal Branding Lessons You Learn by Falling in love**

The first guideline I share with a new client is, “You don’t build a personal brand. People do, when they see excellence & have pride in associating with you.” So you must, “Enlarge as a human being, Excel as a social media being and Evolve as a personal brand.” ([Read More](#))

## **Expressing Thought Leadership through Personal Branding**

Let me tell you a fairy tale today. Once upon a time thought leadership was a tough job indeed. One of the earliest thought leaders in the world, ([Read more](#))

## **3 Steps to Thought Leadership**

Walk the walk, Talk the talk and then walk the talk ([Read more](#))

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